

YASSKY'S PLAN

End Sunday meters, try permits for parking

By Patrick Gallahe
The Brooklyn Papers

Councilman David Yassky must have taken a deep breath before making his New Year's resolutions.

The first-term councilman ended 2002 with a zealous missive to the Bloomberg administration outlining a series of ambitious priorities for his Downtown Brooklyn district.

In a Dec. 24 letter to Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff, Yassky urged the administration to implement a pilot program for residential parking permits in the areas surrounding Downtown Brooklyn, reduce abuses of government-issued parking permits, consider implementing a bus loop around Downtown Brooklyn, and pull back Sunday metered parking on some commercial and residential streets.

"I believe the issue of greatest concern to the residents of Downtown Brooklyn and the surrounding neighborhoods is the impact additional development will have on traffic and parking," Yassky wrote. "Downtown Brooklyn and the nearby residential areas already suffer severe congestion."

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Though Yassky, whose district includes DUMBO, Downtown Brooklyn, Boerum Hill and a portion of Park Slope, voted on behalf of the expansion of seven-day-a-week meter parking last November — as part of the budget modification agreed upon between Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council — he thought the program should now be refined.

In his letter, he cited Fulton Ferry as a neighborhood that does not feature a bus loop and commercial presence and said it therefore made little sense to encourage high turnover of parking spaces there.

"Many of the streets are not commercial streets," Yassky wrote. "Including the newly metered Fulton Ferry area where the community is trying to encourage waterfront activity."

Many of the suggestions are a hodgepodge of issues that have been lobbied for by community groups for years, such as 4 pm to 7 pm parking on Atlantic Avenue and stricter enforcement of municipal parking permits.

The efforts of Atlantic Avenue merchants to drum up

Mayor dooms districts

Clemens time

New York Yankees pitcher Roger Clemens visited St. Ephrem's School in Dyker Heights on Monday, where he gave John Cullen, 10, some pointers on pitching.



Proposes school reforms citywide

By Deborah Kolben and Patrick Gallahe
The Brooklyn Papers

Mayor Michael Bloomberg pulled back the curtains Wednesday on a sweeping body of reforms that seek to dissolve the current structure of Community School Boards as part of a complete overhaul on the city's educational system.

Taking the stage at Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Bloomberg said, "We are at the dawn of a new movement — one that will liberate the next generation of New Yorkers from the devastating consequences of continued educational failure."

Bloomberg proposed to "put an end to decades of diffused and confused educational administration" by streamlining the "Byzantine administrative fieldwork multiplied under the Board of Ed."

His plan proposes a single chain of command that would begin with the chancellor and flow through the city's schools, from kindergarten through 12th grade, rather than the current two-tiered structure, which has different levels of accountability for middle and elementary schools and for high schools.



Michael Bloomberg BP / File

Curriculum would be controlled from the Tweed Courthouse, and would be the same citywide, except in 200 "successful schools" which, the mayor said, would be allowed to continue to dictate their own curriculum, hire their own teachers and set their own budgets.

"It's time to have a unified way of teaching our children," said Bloomberg, who emphasized that a core curriculum of reading, writing and math would "be the fuel that drives this engine."

Bloomberg's proposal would also replace the city's 32 community school districts with 10 instructional leadership divisions called Learning Support Centers, which would be supervised by the Deputy Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, a position currently held by Diana Lam.

Each Learning Support Center would be guided by a superintendent, selected by Schools Chancellor Joel Klein based on "extraordinary past achievement," Bloomberg said, and from Tweed Courthouse the superintendents would coordinate policy.

Each Learning Support Center would also have a regional base in city-owned or leased property to house 10 local instructional supervisors, who would oversee more than a dozen nearby schools each.

"In other words," Bloomberg said, "on the instructional side, accountability and responsibility goes directly from one deputy chancellor to 10 regional superintendents to 100 local instructional supervisors, to 1,200 principals to 80,000 teachers to 1,100,000 students, who we are here to serve."

Bloomberg's proposal also calls for a "parent coordinator" for each school, whose job would be to engage parents in their child's education and serve as a liaison between parents and the school.

The mayor also proposed that school boards be replaced with "parent engagement boards" for each school, "on which only parents would be represented."

See **MAYOR** on page 4

ON THE WATERFRONT

Gov. pushes development

By Patrick Gallahe
The Brooklyn Papers

Towards the end of his Jan. 8 State of the State address, after talk of terror threats and fiscal crisis, education and pollution, Gov. George Pataki said, "Let's continue to reclaim our waterfronts and provide new recreational opportunities for the families of New York."

Then, as an aside, the governor looked toward Borough President Marty Markowitz, who was in the audience, and said, "Isn't that right, Marty?"

The past year held plenty of causes for celebration when it came to the Brooklyn waterfront, and while many wait with a great deal of dread for details on how the state is going to close a several billion dollar deficit, the wink and nod from the governor to the borough president in Albany may indicate that the party on the Brooklyn waterfront is not over yet.

"I've been through 25 State of the State speeches," Markowitz told The Brooklyn Papers this week. "So I know that this is only the opening salvo in the budget process. But I wholeheartedly agree that reclaiming Brooklyn's waterfront should be one of our top priorities."

Markowitz said the two talked later that evening and the governor "said he was looking forward to working with me in the coming year."

Though Markowitz and Pataki used to sit on opposite sides of the aisle as state senators, the recently re-elected governor has taken a particular shine to

By Patrick Gallahe
The Brooklyn Papers

A home on a quiet tree-lined street near Green-Wood Cemetery was branded with anti-Semitic graffiti to start the new year, and this week, Councilman Bill DeBlasio and Borough President Marty Markowitz paid the victimized family a visit to condemn the act and cover up the offensive scrawl.

On Jan. 3, a resident of the house, whose name and address is being withheld at her request, returned home with her 11-year-old daughter only to see the word "JEWZ" emblazoned on their garage door in white, spray-painted letters against a brown back-

ground that appeared to have been made with brushstrokes.

Alongside the bigoted defacement, various graffiti "tags" also marred the garage door.

"When I came home and saw it we were shocked," she said. "My daughter said, 'You didn't put any Christmas lights out, and I told you to do so...'"

Their home was one of the few on the block that did not have Christmas lights, and although they don't celebrate Christmas, the daughter said she initially urged her parents to put the lights because she thought they were pretty.

The woman, who is a non-practicing Catholic, and her husband, who is Jewish, have lived in the neighborhood for about year.

"My only concern is that she not hide who she is," the mother said of her daughter.

They spoke to friends and the police in their Kensington neighborhood, and elected officials eventually got wind of the incident. On Tuesday, they gathered to decry the bigoted act of vandalism.

"Despite how good the neighborhood is, and how good the people are, we still have to stand up and send a message," said DeBlasio, whose district includes parts of Park Slope, Kensington, Borough Park, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill and Windsor Terrace. "Whoever was the perpetrator, this is absolutely unacceptable in our community."

"This is one of the most religiously diverse communities in New York City," said Markowitz. "Whoever did this needs the Lord very badly."

See **GRAFFITI** on page 6



Borough President Marty Markowitz (far left) and Councilman Bill DeBlasio (far right) with family in front of their defaced garage. The Brooklyn Papers / Tom Catlin

CB6 OKs Slope building height limits

By Patrick Gallahe
The Brooklyn Papers

Community Board 6 passed a long-sought proposal to impose height limits on a huge swath of Park Slope Wednesday night, but the board did so without adding an affordable housing incentive for developers along Fourth Avenue.

A previous amendment to decrease the allowable height on Fourth Avenue with an allowance to build above the zoning limit if 20 percent of the units are affordable was voted down by the board's Land Use committee. But the issues of height and affordability were raised again before the full board on Jan. 8, this time exclusive of one another.

"We have a housing shortage," said board member Michele Bonan, who urged the board to amend the plan to include 20 percent affordable housing on Fourth Avenue. "But really, we have an affordable housing shortage."

City Planning Commission Chairwoman Amanda Burden told the board Wednesday night that the pri-

mary goal of the proposal is to "preserve the historic character of Park Slope" and "create more opportunities for apartment house construction." The Department of City Planning is sponsoring the plan through the land use review process.

Bonan proposed that the board amend the plan to state: "[CB6] urges the administration to explore options for creating affordable housing on Fourth Avenue with the goal that 20 percent of the new units developed along Fourth Avenue be affordable to low- and moderate-income families."

The amendment was a less specific version of an ultimately unsuccessful proposal that came before the Land Use committee last month.

At that meeting, the Fifth Avenue Committee, a non-profit affordable housing advocacy group in Park Slope, pushed for the proposal to add "inclusionary zoning" along Fourth Avenue, which would decrease the allowable height on the avenue but give developers the opportunity to build above the zoning if 20 percent of their units were affordable to low- and middle-income people.

Councilman Bill DeBlasio and David Yassky endorsed the Fifth Avenue Committee amendment. DeBlasio called the proposal "a terrific opportunity in our neighborhood to expand housing of all types."

While City Planning's proposal has Fourth Avenue slated to become an R8A zone, with a maximum allowable height of 120 feet, Brad Lander, executive director of the Fifth Avenue Committee, requested the proposal be amended to make Fourth Avenue an R7A zone, which would allow for a building height of just 80 feet, allowing some incentive for developers should an inclusionary housing program be brought to Fourth Avenue.

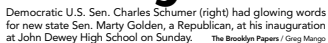
"Under this program... a developer receives a 'density bonus,' or additional development rights of approximately 20 percent if they build affordable housing within their development," Lander told the Land Use committee last month.

Stymied by the implications and complexities of the amendment — and unwilling to delay the new zone —

See **SLOPE REZONE** on page 2

Crossing lines

Democratic U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer (right) had glowing words for new state Sen. Marty Golden, a Republican, at his inauguration at John Dewey High School on Sunday.



The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Marago

DUMBO's a furniture destination

By Patrick Gallahe
The Brooklyn Papers

Just as the Bowery is the lighting district of New York City, and Seventh Avenue in Midtown is the garment district too, is DUMBO on course to become a shopping destination.

The arrival of ABC Carpet and Home last October may have sealed the deal for a vision of a furniture district in the formerly industrial neighborhood between the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges.

"It makes sense," said Jed Walentas, a spokesman for Two Trees Management, the development company owned by his father,

David Walentas, who is the largest single landowner in DUMBO. "So that's something we'd like to perpetuate."

ABC Carpet and Home took a 10-year lease on 40,000 square feet of retail space at 201 Jay St., joining local and nationally known furniture designers and retailers in the neighborhood, such as 20th Century Modern, at 57 Pearl St., and West Elm, owned by Williams-Sonoma, which has a five-year lease on 25,000 square feet of design studio space in 55 Washington St. In addition, Hado, a nationally known lighting manufacturer, is bracing to assume a 10-year lease on 5,000 square feet of space in 1 Main St., next spring.

"There's no concrete plan to make it a furniture district," Walentas said. "I think the combination of the neighborhood being a real artist haven and having a lot of tenants that make furniture and cabinetry — it makes sense."

Besides the ground-floor retailers, the upper floors host a slew of furniture designers, such as City Joinery, at 70 Washington St.; Tim Hill Level Collective at 45 Main St.; and H & A Upholstery, at 141 Front St., a custom upholsterer run by husband-and-wife team Hector and Anna Barbacene.

With Walentas running out of retail space, however, his ability to draw new merchants to the neighborhood may seem exhausted. Meanwhile, the other major landlord in the area, Joshua Guttman, appears to agree with

the value of the vision — his company holds the lease with 20th Century, which is expanding its space from 1,000 square feet at 84 Front St. to new digs, totaling 3,000 square feet, at 57 Pearl St.

"The more the better," said 20th Century Modern's owner Kirk Mrvik, of the onslaught of shops. "Everybody seems to have their own look, their own idea and their own design."

Mrvik, who's been in business for around four years selling vintage and antique furniture, said the neighborhood had traditionally hosted showrooms for dealers in Manhattan but didn't attract destination shoppers. While Mrvik has a vested interest

See **DUMBO** on page 4



ABC Carpet and Home, on Jay Street, is one of many new furniture stores in DUMBO. The Brooklyn Papers / Sheri Liberman

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CB2 vet's rift with chair worsens

By Patrick Gallahue
The Brooklyn Papers

Just when it seemed Community Board 2 members might finally put aside their differences and start dealing with matters before the board, a longtime member resigned his committee chairmanship claiming irreconcilable differences with Chairwoman Shirley McKee.

Roy Vanasco, chairman of the Traffic and Transportation committee and a 34-year veteran of CB2, sent a letter to Borough President Markowitz, dated Jan. 6, to inform the borough president that he was stepping down from his committee post.

Vanasco, who was appointed to the board in 1969 by then-Borough President Abe Stark, said in his letter that resolutions and conferences undertaken by his committee



Roy Vanasco BP / File

were repeatedly blocked by the chairwoman over the last eight months. Those included an effort to organize a meeting between his committee and transportation officials about upcoming challenges to Downtown traffic and an evacuation plan in case of another terrorist attack on New York City.

"This lack of cooperation

resulted in the chair's continued failure to support approval of a resolution of support for the conference that the committee had decided it wanted to bring to the full community board for discussion," Vanasco wrote.

"We only wanted a full and open debate where the general public would have a chance to have their say. You might not know, but this was my first time in April. I can't work like that."

While Vanasco said he was waiting for the chairwoman's approval, McKee told The Brooklyn Papers this week that she left the conferences for Vanasco to organize. "To date," she said, "nothing has been given to me."

The bickering even made its way to elected officials. In a failed attempt to bring peace to the pair, Fort Greene Councilman James Davis set up a meeting between McKee, who

is a Davis appointee, and Vanasco several months ago.

Davis said that while not all of their differences were rectified during the meeting he hoped the two had started a dialogue that would continue.

"There has to be some compromise in any organization and some give and take," Davis said of the meeting. "I guess because of their differences in schedule they never had time to flesh out their differences."

Vanasco, who claims not to know the source of their differences, said McKee failed to return repeated calls and that an effort to send off a simple letter of introduction to Acting Brooklyn Transportation Commissioner Lori Ardito, on CB2 letterhead, was stymied waiting for McKee's approval.

McKee scoffed at the suggestion that she blocked Vanasco from contacting city agencies

and said she personally contacted Ardito and that the borough commissioner appeared before Vanasco's committee in December at her request.

"I don't know what more he wants," she said. "She was there."

Vanasco will remain on the board, and on the committee. According to the CB2 bylaws, McKee will appoint a replacement chair.

Despite infighting and a share of hostility between various members of the board and

from Warren Street to 15th Street, which boasts a much wider roadway than the other corridors in Park Slope. That strip is suggested to be rezoned to R5A, which would allow for buildings as high as 120 feet, or about 12 stories, setback at 85 feet.

Judi Pfeiffer, a Slope merchant and board member who is president of the Fifth Avenue Merchants Association, expressed concerns that the higher limits on Fourth Avenue would increase traffic, crowd local schools and suffocate the neighboring blocks of air and light.

She proposed an amendment that would bring the height on Fourth Avenue down to R7A, with an 80-foot height limit.

Citing the wide streets, adequate transportation lines and the goal of creating more apartments, the board voted down the amendment by a vote of 29-8.

Now that the proposal has passed the first stage of the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure it will come before Borough President Markowitz, who will hold a public hearing at Borough Hall on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6 p.m.

Markowitz has 30 days to make a recommendation before it goes on to the City Planning Commission and then the City Council.

An exception to the proposal is along Fourth Avenue,

SLOPE ZONING...

Continued from page 1

ing — the Land Use committee unconditionally passed the city's proposal by a vote of 12-0 with two abstentions.

The committee did punt the matter for future consideration, however, by including a motion "to encourage affordable housing wherever possible, as rapidly as possible" in their recommendation to approve the zoning plan.

For groups like the Park Slope Civic Council, which has lobbied on behalf of height limits in the southern half of the Slope for more than a decade, inclusionary zoning represented a threat to quick implementation of height limits,

especially since the housing program's expansion to Brooklyn would require a separate public review process.

Inclusionary zoning is currently only applicable in parts of Manhattan that are zoned R10, the highest residential zone in the city.

"I know the Fifth Avenue Committee is well-intentioned," said Bernice Graham, president of the Park Slope Civic Council. "I like the Fifth Avenue Committee. I understand their mission, but in this situation the imperative is to lower the height of buildings and not jeopardize the proposal."

Ultimately, Bonan's proposed amendment met the

same fate as did the Fifth Avenue Committee's and became a motion stating the board's position, though one that did not affect the actual proposal. The decision to include Bonan's proposal as a motion rather than an amendment was approved by the full board 34-3.

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Vanasco will remain on the board, and on the committee. According to the CB2 bylaws, McKee will appoint a replacement chair.

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She proposed an amendment that would bring the height on Fourth Avenue down to R7A, with an 80-foot height limit.

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Citing the wide streets, adequate transportation lines and the goal of creating more apartments, the board voted down the amendment by a vote of 29-8.

Now that the proposal has passed the first stage of the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure it will come before Borough President Markowitz, who will hold a public hearing at Borough Hall on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6 p.m.

Markowitz has 30 days to make a recommendation before it goes on to the City Planning Commission and then the City Council.

An exception to the proposal is along Fourth Avenue,

and said she personally contacted Ardito and that the borough commissioner appeared before Vanasco's committee in December at her request.

"I don't know what more he wants," she said. "She was there."

Vanasco will remain on the board, and on the committee. According to the CB2 bylaws, McKee will appoint a replacement chair.

Despite infighting and a share of hostility between various members of the board and

from Warren Street to 15th Street, which boasts a much wider roadway than the other corridors in Park Slope. That strip is suggested to be rezoned to R5A, which would allow for buildings as high as 120 feet, or about 12 stories, setback at 85 feet.

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Gowanus tunnel still up in air

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Local civic groups have fought for years to have the crumbling Gowanus Expressway replaced with a tunnel. At a public hearing at Victory Memorial Hospital in Bay Ridge on Jan. 13, community members gathered to view 13 tunnel plans the state Department of Transportation (DOT) is considering as a replacement for the 5.7-mile elevated highway running from the Battery Tunnel at Hamilton Avenue, along the border of Carroll Gardens and Red Hook, through Sunset Park and down to the Belt Parkway and the Ver-

razano-Narrows Bridge.

Once a tunnel alternative plan is selected, its cost and effectiveness will be compared to a renovation of the expressway, which is priced at around \$400 to \$500 million.

More than a decade ago, the DOT announced that the elevated highway — built in the 1940s under Robert Moses' reign as head of the bridge and tunnel authority — required a major overhaul. Since that time, community groups have feverishly fought to have a tunnel replace the expressway. When those groups believed their concerns were being brushed aside, they banded together, and in 1997 sued the state Department of Transportation and Federal Highways Administration.

In January 2001, the federal and state agencies settled the suit and awarded the community with \$375,000 to hire a consultant to represent them in further planning.

As part of the settlement, the parties involved agreed to create the Gowanus Community Stakeholders Group (GCSG), to work with the DOT on the creation of a tunnel alternative plan.

An additional \$18 million in funding was earmarked by Reps. Jerrad Nadler, Nydia Velázquez and Ed Towns to finance tunnel alternative studies. In March, the groups hired a consulting team consisting of four firms: Hatch Mott MacDonald, Environmental PC, Wells and Associates LLC, and the Regional Plan Association, which first developed the idea of replacing the elevated highway with a tunnel.

The first GCSG community meeting was held in Sunset Park last February. Since then, the group has hosted forums in several other neighborhoods in-

cluding Carroll Gardens and Brooklyn Heights. The next one will be held in Red Hook.

Mathy Stanislaus, a member of the technical advising team, said most neighborhoods have had the same complaints about the Gowanus and would like to see it tucked away underground. In addition to pollution from the elevated roadway, community members worry about the traffic and the bisecting of communities caused by the roadway.

With maps and plans for each of the 13 plans, advisors at Monday night's meeting highlighted some of the key issues and fielded questions from concerned community members.

"We have cars cutting through our community, spewing pollution and reducing our quality of life," said GCSG member Bob Cassara, a Bay Ridge who got involved with the group because

he was outraged over illegal truck traffic on local streets.

"None of these are good," Cassara said while holding up maps detailing several of the proposals.

Turn out was small at the meeting Monday evening, due in part to cold weather and lack of advance notice, but those present expressed their concerns about several of the plans.

"Are we going to lose Shore Parkway?" one community member asked after a plan was presented that would turn the highway into a two-way road.

Longtime Gowanus activist Buddy Scotto said he hit the panic button when he heard the DOT wanted to renovate the expressway. "What happens to traffic during the construction?" Scotto asked, concerned that renovation would clog local streets with traffic from the Ver-

razano-Narrows Bridge.

Stanislaus explained that with new tunnel-boring technology, a tunnel could be built under another avenue, or even underwater, allowing traffic to move along the current structure until after the tunnel was complete.

While most agreed that a tunnel was the way to go, everybody had the same question — How were they going to pay for it?

"Where are we going to get the money?" asked Mary Nissen, president of the Victory Block Association, whose members largely live near the Gowanus' connection to the Verrazano bridge.

The tunnel proponents argued that while initial costs of repairing the existing expressway might be less than building a tunnel the maintenance costs would be less since a tunnel requires fewer repairs.

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Hits dad with axe

The Brooklyn Papers

A 44-year-old Park Slope man was struck over the head with an axe while eating breakfast.

The victim told police he was having breakfast with his wife on Jan. 7, at around 12:30 pm, in their home on Fourth Avenue at Douglass Street, when he got into an argument with his 26-year-old son. The son attacked him with an axe. The victim was treated at

Blotters

Long Island College Hospital.

Police have identified the son, who lives in Manhattan, and he is wanted for questioning.

Gunpoint rob
A woman, 40, told police that a man forced his way into her apartment, on Seventh Av-

enue between Eighth and Ninth streets, and held her at gunpoint on Jan. 7.

She said that at around 10 am, the intruder pushed open the unlocked door and at gunpoint demanded to know where her money was.

The victim replied that she did not have any money other than the \$80 in her pockets. The gunman took the money, ordered the woman into the bathroom and then fled.

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MAYOR...

Continued from page 1

ents of children attending that local school may serve," leaving them, he said, "protected from being compromised by local politicians as has happened every time in the past."

In Brooklyn, his proposal was met with a mixture of partial approval and caution.

"There is a lot to like about the mayor's speech this morning," said Park Slope Councilman Bill DeBlasio, a former member of Community School Board 15, which includes Park Slope, Red Hook, Sunset Park, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens and Kensington.

DeBlasio, however, ex-

pressed concern that decisions regarding curriculum would be made at Tweed Courthouse rather than at the local level.

"Parents need to have a seat at the table where it counts," said DeBlasio, whose two children attend public school in Brooklyn. "Not only at their schools but also where regional policy and budget decisions are made."

Ethel Tucker, superintendent of District 21, which includes Bensonhurst, Coney Island and Brighton Beach, said she was waiting on "greater knowledge of what type of curriculum and how it's going to be implemented," before passing judgment

on the plan.

"We, as the No. 1 district in Brooklyn, have always put children first," she said. "Our schools are achieving, so we are certainly for anything that makes instruction the core."

The state Legislature passed new laws last year that significantly restructured control of New York City schools. The New York City School Governance Reform Law, passed last June, put the responsibility for the city's schools back into the hands of the mayor for the first time since 1969.

DeBlasio will speak on behalf of the idea before the State Task Force on School Governance, which will hear testimony from parents, educators, elected officials and residents,

about the abolition of community school boards. Thursday, Jan. 16 at Polytechnic University in Downtown Brooklyn.

It will be the last public hearing before the task force makes its recommendations to Gov. George Pataki and the Legislature.

There will doubtless be many who will make a last stand on behalf of the school boards. Many school board members raised their voices over the abolition of the boards while the mayor's proposal was still only a name.

School Board 21 President Carmine Santa Maria called the city's plan to overthrow school boards "asinine."

"They're putting the cart before the horse," said Santa Maria, who blamed the media as much as he blamed Bay

Ridge-Gravesend Assemblywoman Adele Cohen, who introduced the legislation for the city's push to abolish the school boards.

"The press has already had a field day with the school boards," he said. "There have been bad school boards but there have been school boards that worked, like ours."

School Board 20 Vice President Carlo Scisura said, "When you centralize a system, the local voice will stop being heard. And that's a terrible thing."

Even school board veterans, who did not oppose the mayor's plan out of hand, still had many questions before offering an endorsement.

"The roughly half a dozen 'off-line' support centers will each have a responsibility for

separate geographic areas of the city and be housed in learning support centers," Bloomberg added. "Each will be run by a single regional operations manager."

Bloomberg estimated the liberation of classrooms currently used for operations would create at least 8,000 new classroom seats and said class sizes would be reduced from 33 students to 28.

The State Task Force on School Governance Reform, a committee of 20 state Senators and Assemblymen formed last summer, is responsible for leading the public hearings and presenting a list of recommendations on Feb. 15 to replace the system of community representation and parental input on local school issues currently in place.

P'Park rape arrest

The Brooklyn Papers

A homeless man lured a teenager into Prospect Park over the weekend and repeatedly raped her, according to police.

The alleged assailant, Rodney Florvil, 43, was taken into custody on Saturday, shortly after the alleged incident and near where he met his 19-year-old victim, police said.

Florvil allegedly approached the girl at a fast food restaurant on Empire Boulevard late Friday night and convinced her to accompany him into the park. Police said he took her to a location near what is known as the Three Arch Bridge and raped her. The New York Post cited police sources as

saying that he would not let the girl go and kept her near him, raping her two more times in the course of the night.

Early the next morning, at around 4:30 a.m., she escaped his custody and went to police, who arrested Florvil at Empire Boulevard and Flatbush Avenue during a search of the area.

Florvil's attorney with the Legal Aid Society could not be reached by press time.

Citing the attack, along with other recent sexual assaults, in Crown Heights and Queens, activists have begun to call for stricter security measures in city parks.

New Yorkers for Parks, a non-

profit organization that lobbies for safer parks, protested on the steps of City Hall Tuesday that New York is woefully short of law enforcement personnel in the city's 28,600 acres of parkland.

According to the organization, there are only 14 Park Enforcement Patrol officers in all of Brooklyn, and they only work until sundown. The park enforcement officers are part of the city Department of Parks and Recreation, New Yorkers for Parks is requesting that the agency be incorporated into the police department.

Officers from Park Slope's 78th Precinct patrol Prospect Park at night. —Gallagher

DUMBO...

Continued from page 1

in seeing that change, he thinks it may take a little more time.

"It hasn't fit yet," he said.

"It hasn't really become a retail place."

Although its genesis is difficult to pinpoint, an idea has been floating around the neighborhood for a furniture expo, not unlike the DUMBO Art Under the Bridge Festival, in which upper-level artists open their studios to aficionados for a weekend.

While Valentas was unable to say who came up with the idea, it was one he was familiar with and embraced.

"There are certainly lots of models for it," he said. "We would love to see something like that happen."

The same prosperity has not rubbed off on many of the craftspeople in the neighborhood.

With the area's booming residential and commercial development, some of those that helped establish DUMBO as an artist enclave have fallen victim to an economic natural selection. One former DUMBO craftsman specializing in furniture, who asked that his name not be used, consistently saw his rent escalate \$200 to

\$250 annually and finally sought new digs in Red Hook.

He said the stores that have established reputations and a strong customer base stand a chance at surviving amid major designers and retailers.

"There's a lot of artisans still over there," he said. "But most guys are looking for cheaper space."

Indy to party

The Independence Community Bank branch at 40 Washington St. will have its grand opening Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6:30 p.m. The regular bank hours will be 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays. There will also be two 24-hour ATMs at the branch. The bank is the first in DUMBO.

YASSKY...

Continued from page 1

commuters have consistently been frustrated by city workers that they use their parking permits, which are supposed to be used only for official business, as a means of free parking, taking spots that would otherwise be occupied by shoppers.

"You're just not supposed to use those permits for driving to work," Yassky told The Brooklyn Papers this week.

"But a lot of those employees abuse them. Because the courts are nearby you have police officers, corrections officers and assistant district attorneys that have to appear in court by driving to Downtown Brooklyn... some of [the parking] is legitimate, some of it is not."

"I'm happy that Councilman Yassky is addressing it," said Sandy Balboa, president of the Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association (AABA). "It hurts the merchants here and it hurts business."

Charging that some of the permits are actually fake, Yassky asked the city to conduct an inventory of parking permits issued to government employees and reduce that number by 25 percent, dedicate police to enforce permits and tow any cars bearing fake permits, and provide dedicated off-street parking to government employees on official business.

As a pilot resident parking

the intersection of Tillary and Adams streets.

Yassky's suggestion broadly seeks "an additional cross on Adams Street between Tillary Street and the Brooklyn Bridge so that the thousands of residents of Concord Village can cross safely to Brooklyn Heights."

"It would definitely help all the pedestrians, not just Concord Village," said Jon Quint, a resident of Concord Village and a member of Community Board 2. "Because part of the plan would save everyone on the [Brooklyn Bridge] walkway from being shuttled into the 'cattle chute'" at Tillary and Adams streets, as the intersection is known.

Yassky did not attach a deadline to his proposals, or even a percentage that he hoped to accomplish in a year's end, but he said some ideas, such as the residential parking permits pilot program, stricter enforcement of government parking permits and a revision of Sunday metered parking, "we could do immediately."

Others, he acknowledged, may take more time.

Among the less urgent but more ambitious proposals in the letter was a revised proposition to expand ferry service to Downtown Brooklyn.

Last year, Yassky, who also chairs the council's Select Committee on Waterfronts, held hearings to suggest expanding ferry service between the boroughs, proposing new routes between Brooklyn Heights, Greenpoint, Far Rockaway in

Queens, and Manhattan as well as maintaining a temporary route from Sunset Park to Lower Manhattan.

The proposal enjoyed supportive testimony from city Transportation Commissioner Iris Weisshall, and Andrew Alper, president of the city's Economic Development Corporation. However, it was eventually torpedoed by Bloomberg in his executive budget.

Yassky's revised plan suggests developing commuter lines between John F. Kennedy Airport and either the Brooklyn Army Terminal or Fulton Ferry Landing or Atlantic Avenue, with a shuttle bus to Metrotech and other Downtown stops.

With future development on the way, he hopes the proposal will reach a more receptive ear.

He also proposed a plan, currently in the works by Community Board 2, to develop a bus route between subway stations and the various planned attractions in the district, such as Brooklyn Bridge Park along the waterfront between Jay and Jerusalem streets, and the BAM Cultural District in Fort Greene.

"Some of the things ... won't be as necessary until there's more development," Yassky said of the ferry and bus routes.

While the administration contemplates the proposals, Yassky is hoping the mayor's affinity for Downtown Brooklyn as the city's third major business hub carries

forward his wish list.

Bloomberg has already focused on three strips — Livingston Street, the Flatbush Avenue extension, and between Willoughby Street — as potential corridors of commercial, retail or residential activity. He allocated \$750,000 last summer towards a \$1.25 million Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on rezoning certain manufacturing zones, increasing building capacity and creating height restrictions on residential stops.

"The administration has serious commitments to developing Downtown Brooklyn," Yassky said. "And I think that's not just building more buildings but providing the transportation infrastructure and amenities that go along with the new buildings."

Additional suggestions in Yassky's 18-point wish list included long-frustrated cries on the part of the Boerum Hill Association and AABA to relocate the Atlantic Transitional Center, at 316 Atlantic Ave., citing the repeated incidents of violence that have been traced back to the center over the past several years.

He also suggested studying the possibility of making Schermerhorn Street two-way between Smith Street and Flatbush Avenue to reduce traffic of residential streets, and including Downtown Brooklyn in Bloomberg's "Operation Silent Night" — a pilot project experimenting with various methods of enforcement on noise violations which the mayor launched last October.

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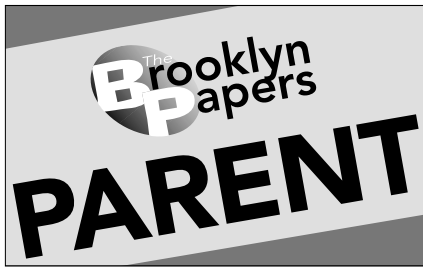
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Previewing Catholic Schools Week

The Brooklyn Papers

With Catholic Schools Week coming up later this month, here is information about some of Brooklyn's finest institutions:

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St. Charles Borromeo is located at 23 Sidney Pl. in Brooklyn Heights; (718) 596-1362.

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Established in 1917 by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, St. Saviour's provides young women with a four year college preparatory program.

The school achieved national recognition in 1999 as an "outstanding school" on the list of the top 96 high schools across the United States, in a research project published in US News and World Report. The student-to-teacher ratio is 10-to-1, and graduates are routinely accepted at top colleges.

St. Saviour's mission is to provide quality education and support for the learning potential of its 350 students of diverse religious backgrounds and cultures. The values-rich environment enables the students to excel, and encourages them to positively impact our world. Many sports, clubs and religious studies programs are available, as are AP and college level courses.

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Ninety-eight percent of Xaverian's graduates go on to the first college of their choice, generating more than \$10 million in scholarship money.

Xaverian High School is located at 7100 Shore Road in Bay Ridge; (718) 856-7100; www.xaverian.org

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Toddlers tend to fuss until about age 3, says Rhea Hauge, a pediatric dentist. Then they become more tolerant but still need supervision while brushing until age 7 or 8.

"Some parents don't realize a toddler's teeth need to be brushed and flossed, and the child can't do an adequate job," she says. "No matter what fit the kid pitches, the parent has to do this."

To get through the "no-no" toddler phase, try to make brushing fun and give your child a bit of control. One strategy: Let your child brush his teeth before or after you've done a thorough cleaning.

Ideas from parents:

- To make brushing less of a chore, one mother taps into her son's love of dinosaurs, and tells him he has beautiful T-Rex teeth.

- Enlist the help of a lion and other animals in a pop-up book for preschoolers, "Brush Your Teeth Please" (Reader's Digest, 1995) by Leslie McGuire.

- Let your child watch you as you brush your teeth and floss, then let him see himself in the mirror as you clean his teeth.

- Put up a teeth-brushing chart, such as one at www.mriadentist.com, and give small rewards for cooperation.

Parent-to-Parent



By Betsy Flagler

riettadentist.com, and give small rewards for cooperation.

Be creative. Turn a familiar tune such as "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" into your child's personal tooth-brushing song.

The brushing approach Hauge recommends: Place your wiggly toddler across your lap and cradle his head against your stomach. Brush using only water, then floss. If necessary, enlist a spouse or sibling to hold your child's hands.

"Once you have finished, put a thin smear or pea-size amount of toothpaste on the toothbrush and coach your child as he brushes in the mirror," Hauge suggests.

It's important to supervise how much toothpaste your child uses, she says. Kids tend to dislike mint flavors but like to glob on artificially sweetened brands.

More than the recommended pea-sized amount of toothpaste makes too much foam

and may increase the amount swallowed.

If a child hasn't learned to spit out toothpaste, he's not ready to use it because over time he may swallow too much fluoride, which can cause discoloration of the permanent teeth.

Hauge prefers to start seeing her patients at age 1, mainly to teach parents about how to brush and floss, what to do to prevent decay and what to look for as the child develops.

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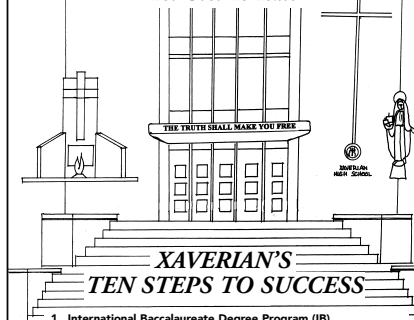
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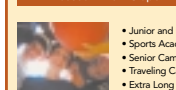
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Milman dumps Dem leadership role

By Patrick Gallahue
The Brooklyn Papers

Amid all the financial, judicial and criminal controversies swirling around the Democratic Party in Brooklyn, the chairwoman and treasurer of the embattled body have both quietly resigned.

Assemblywoman Joan Milman announced she will abdicate her post as chairwoman of the Kings County Democratic Committee, while Thomas Garry, the treasurer, relinquished his role several months ago.

While Milman said she was leaving her largely "ceremonial" role to spend more time with the constituents in her redrawn Brownstone Brooklyn district, which includes portions of Park Slope, Brooklyn Heights, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, her resignation comes at a distinct time in the party's history.

Wrecked by internal division over the party's selection of judges, fiscal inappropriacies, lost elections and charges of patronage, the party has been the subject of internal and external reproach.

"I have to take both Mc Carthy and Assemblywoman Milman at their face value for what their reasons are," said Alan Fleischman, the male district leader for Milman's 52nd Assembly District. "But one can't help but think there is some connection to all the problems the Kings County Democratic Committee has had in the years."

Milman said she asked to be relieved of her position last October, but was asked to remain until after the holidays. She agreed and did not formally make her intentions known until recently.

"I'm not doing it because there's something else going on," she said. "It's a personal decision. I don't really need to do it anymore. My responsibilities in Albany will increase, so cutting out at least one month isn't a bad thing."

Milman said she recently requested additional committee assignments, such as the Transportation Committee, to deal with Downtown Brooklyn traffic problems, and is in the process of organizing hearings later this year on health care in women's prisons as part of her position as chairwoman of the Assembly's Women's Issues Task Force.

No replacements have yet been selected, according to Jeff Feldman, the executive director of the Kings County Democratic Committee.

She denied that her resignation was influenced by the party's recent succession of fiascos.

The chairman of the Kings County Democratic Committee's executive committee, Assemblyman Clarence Norman, has come under heavy scrutiny for failing to report a \$115,000 loan between

the county committee and his campaign re-election committee, in a year when he was't even on the ballot.

There was additional frustration that his political club, the Thurgood Marshall Democratic Club in Crown Heights, received \$245,000 from former Public Advocate Mark Green's campaign for mayor, with very little of it going to other political clubs.

The city's Campaign Finance Board is auditing candidates in the 2001 races to see if they reported all the money that was received from the county committee.

Within party ranks, there has also been intense dissatisfaction over county's method for selecting candidates to the bench.

The party has snubbed qualified judges in the past that had political differences with elected officials, and district leaders have complained about the backdoor workings of the party's process of selecting judicial candidates.

"From my point of view there is an unhealthy secrecy to how the committee conducts its business," Fleischman said.

Currently, candidates for the Supreme Court in Brooklyn request an application from the Kings County Democratic Committee and then submit it to a judicial screening panel for the Brooklyn and Staten Island county parties. Many district leaders and judicial delegates who vote for candidates, however, don't know who is on the screening committee.

"There's a secret judicial screening panel that no one knows who sits on, and reports only to Clarence," Fleischman said. "It's obscene."

Subsequently, Joanne Semnara, the female district leader for the 60th Assembly District and a candidate for the Bay Ridge-Dyker Heights City Council seat vacated by Marty Golden, proposed that a committee be formed to investigate the process by which the county committee nominates judges.

The Brooklyn Democrats were further rocked by scandal in 2002, with a party-picked judge sentenced to three to nine years in prison for extorting a bribe, several transfers of judges and reports



Joan Milman BP / File photo

of investigations of judges by the state Commission on Judicial Conduct, and the guilty plea of a councilman who had been tapped by the party as their candidate for speaker on charges of shaking down a Red Hook developer.

Milman's position put her at the head of a committee composed of two to four delegates from each election district, and made her an ex officio member of the executive committee. The executive committee, which runs the Kings County Democratic Committee, is composed of 42 district leaders, and is chaired by Norman.

While Milman's position gave her significant oversight over the party's activities, said Feldman, Norman's post makes him the senior presiding officer.

Milman's resignation will likely be made official at the end of this month or the beginning of February, at the next Kings County Democratic Committee meeting, Feldman said.

Her resignation followed the departure of Assemblyman Garry, who stepped down in October.

It was a letter from Garry, and his law partner Arnold Kadwin, that revealed a system of patronage and cronyism led by the Brooklyn Democrats in the borough's courts.

In December of 1999, Ludwig and Garry wrote a letter to the Kings County Democratic Committee's law committee, of

investigations of judges by the state Commission on Judicial Conduct, and the guilty plea of a councilman who had been tapped by the party as their candidate for speaker on charges of shaking down a Red Hook developer.

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GRAFFITI...

Continued from page 1

The incident was even more troublesome after word came of another incident in Flatlands this week, in which a home was burglarized and a swastika was burned into the ceiling with "Kl Kl Jews" scrawled on a wall.

Police did not believe there was a link between the incidents.

Neither the police nor the woman were sure how their Kensington home was singled out and officers were hesitant to label it a bias crime as yet.

"Usually, there is a history of acts in the area," said Inspector Stephen McAllister, commanding officer of the 66th Precinct. "Fortunately, we haven't had any."

McAllister said the tags would be compared to other known graffiti writers in the neighborhood by the precinct's Gang Intelligence Unit. He

was confident the culprit would be caught.

"We have our sources," McAllister said. "And we'll find out in short order."

Markowitz, meanwhile, brought the anti-graffiti task force, formed by his office and the city Economic Development Corporation, to give the garage a fresh coat of paint, purging it of the crude message.

"We do have something so amazing and so special," said DeBlasio.

"Unfortunately, when you have such a diverse, amazing fabric, it can be torn quickly also."

"I think our neighborhood here represents something of a miracle," said the woman whose house was vandalized. "Everybody lives here. There's Muslims, there's Catholics, there's Jews, and we live everyday together."

GOV

Continued from page 1

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husband, Carl Brown. The study, which is taking place in select hospitals nationwide, involves a surgical procedure to deter the effects of Alzheimer's disease by draining the brain of unhealthy toxins. During the procedure, a shunt is implanted into the skull and a catheter is threaded from the brain to the abdomen. The unhealthy toxins, believed to cause the degeneration of the brain, are discharged through the catheter into the abdomen. Most patients return home the day following the procedure. "The preliminary data is very encouraging," said Enrico Cardoso, MD, neurosurgeon and principal investigator at New York Methodist Hospital. The Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Study at New York Methodist Hospital seeks men and women, like Mrs. Brown, who are aged 62 to 85, in the early or middle stage of Alzheimer's disease and who are in otherwise good health, to participate in the study. Participants will receive the experimental treatment at no cost. Participants are placed into a control group or a test group. While participants in both groups will undergo the surgical procedure, only the test group will receive a functioning shunt. "Every study which is approved by the Food and Drug Administration must have a control group in order to make sure that the effects of the procedure are not psychological. No one but the neurosurgeon who implants the shunt will know which patient received a functioning shunt and which patient received a placebo," explained Dr. Cardoso. However, nine months into the eighteen-month study, members of the control group will be offered an open shunt. This procedure is less invasive and may be performed under local anesthesia. Mr. Brown is telling everyone he knows about the study. "Families like the Browns are activists - they are leaders in the fight against Alzheimer's disease," said Dr. Cardoso. For more information about participating in the Alzheimer's Disease Clinical Study, call toll free 1-888-4MYMIND or 1-888-469-6463.

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

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Playwrights and cocktails at Low

BROOKLYN EVENTS CALENDAR: GO 2



Guts & Glory

Tales of Mughal hero on display at Brooklyn Museum

By Lisa J. Curtis
The Brooklyn Papers

Need a respite from ordinary, Western art? Then get a dose of color therapy from the Brooklyn Museum of Art's current exhibition, "The Adventures of Hamza." The 16th-century paintings serve to illustrate the epic Persian tales about Amir Hamza, the paternal uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, who traveled the world spreading the teachings of Islam.

While there doesn't seem to be much represented in these illustrations — brimming with lush, jewel-like colors and intricate patterns — that overtly addresses religious subject matter, there is much that deals with Hamza's heroic adventures. With Ashgar, his three-eyed horse, Hamza travels through Greece, the Caucasus, India, Ceylon and Abyssinia.

In dense compositions, Hamza and his allies wage battle with a fantastic array of fearsome "infidels and enemies," not to mention creatures like dragons, sea monsters, demons and giants. In "Umar Slays a Dragon with Naphtha," attributed to the artist Dasavanta and Tara, the white, serpentine dragon with leopard-like speckles is wreathed in golden flames, his mouth of large, sharp teeth open in a roar of pain. In contrast, the tiny townspeople cower in safety at the top of the frame, while Umar, in gilded clothing, takes on the dragon alone.

Riots of color: (Top) "The Adventures of Hamza," on display at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, are captured in dense, colorful illustrations, such as this detail from "Shahrashoh Leads Hamza to Prison and Tul Mast Recognizes the Amir from His Room in the Caravanserai of Baba Junayd" above. (Hamza is the figure at left, in chains). (Inset) A painting of Iraq, a detail from "Badi'uzzaman Fights Iraq to a Draw."

ART

"The Adventures of Hamza" will be on display at the Brooklyn Museum of Art (200 Eastern Parkway) through Jan. 26. Admission is \$6, \$3 older adults and students with ID, free to children under 12 accompanied by an adult. On Jan. 26 at 3 p.m., members of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra will perform music from Persia to Kashmir, heard through Western composers' ears. Tickets to the concert, which include museum admission and a gallery talk on the exhibit at 2 p.m., are \$15. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the admissions desk, or by calling (718) 622-5838. For more information about "The Adventures of Hamza," call (718) 638-5000.

And the bloodshed! Battles take place in onion-domed castles, in lavish, lush gardens and on ships with dragons' heads carved on their prows. The soldiers go to battle on an elaborately attired array of rhinoceroses, camels, lions, tigers, wolves, elephants and horses.

Hamza's teeming armies go to war with swords raised high. The bloody violence and gruesome dismemberment on the battlefield is graphically represented in several paintings. One character, Marku Boar-Tooth, meets his horrific end at the hands of a veiled youth in a composition by artists Makhlis and Lala. Boar-Tooth is sliced right down the middle by a sword — his corpse flopping to either side like the peel coming off a banana.

Even Khosh-Khiram, a female spy, or *ayvar*, helps the good guys by beheading the icky Kajdest. While for the most part, the female figures in the illustrations are literally in the periphery of the action, in this painting (attributed to artists Basavanna and Makhlis), the woman is painted into

the foreground, her crimson red skirt drawing the viewer's attention. The woman gruesomely holds by the hair the head of Kajdest and in her other hand, a small knife.

Khosh-Khiram's solo victory is made more prominent by the artist painting her against a backdrop of leafy green trees and grass, rather than the usual riot of colorful soldiers and intricately patterned textiles.

Her victim's headless corpse lies unceremoniously splayed in the lower right-hand corner, with his shoes knocked off.

These illustrations for the Hamza epic can be appreciated on two levels: for the story itself, for which these 2-foot-tall paintings were meant to be displayed while a storyteller recounted the tales (the museum translates the text next to each work); and for the skilled craftsmanship, right down to the mesmerizing miniature detailing of intricate patterns and lavish ornamentation on buildings, carpets, canopies and clothing.

New York Times critic Roberta Smith described these paintings, with their varying perspectives and crowded compositions, to being "dense as collage." "The Adventures of Hamza" is a spectacular array of ornamentation, entertaining action and adventure, and painterly prowess, befitting an emperor, especially a young emperor who enjoys a good yarn. The illustrations were commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Akbar, while still a teenager. (Akbar ruled much of what is now northern India from 1556-1605.) Between 1557 and 1572, his atelier of Persian and Hindu artists fulfilled his commission. "The Adventures of Hamza" exhibition reunites more than 50 folios from their mammoth illustrated manu-

See **MAHZA** on page **GO 4**

TRIBUTE

MLK at BAM

Commemorate Martin Luther King Jr. Day at the 17th annual "Come Share the Dream" tribute taking place Jan. 20 at 11:30 am at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Howard Gilman Opera House (30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100). The free event is presented by Borough President Marty Markowitz, BAM and Medgar Evers College.



The keynote address will be delivered by attorney Fred D. Gray (pictured), president of the Alabama State Bar Association and author of the book "Bus Ride to Justice" (River City, 1999).

Gray defended Rosa Parks (who refused to give up her seat to a white man on a city bus), King and the Montgomery bus boycott participants in the landmark 1950s U.S. Supreme Court segregation case. Gray also represented the victims — more than 600 black men — of the Tuskegee syphilis experiment in the 1970s.

Jazz vocalist Liz Wright will perform with Voices from The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. Free screenings of Julie Dash's "The Rosa Parks Story" (2002), starring Angela Bassett, will follow at the BAM Rose Cinemas. Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

THEATER

'Bird' sings

Heights Players production of 'Sweet Bird of Youth' a triumph

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

The tormented world of Tennessee Williams is not easy to reproduce on stage. It takes acting and direction often beyond the scope of community theater. So it is with special enthusiasm that this reviewer recommends the Heights Players' "Sweet Bird of Youth."

The play is directed by Robert J. Weinstein ("A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Desperate Hours") and stars Susan Smith as Alexandra Del Lago, the has-been movie star masquerading as Princess Kosmonopolis, and Christopher Johnson, in his Heights Players debut, as Chance Wayne, the would-be gigolo who supplies Del Lago with lush and sex in the hope that she will give him the boost he needs to rise to movie stardom.

The Broadway production, which opened in 1959 at the Martin Beck Theatre, was directed by Ella Kazan and starred Geraldine Page and Paul Newman. (The 1962 film also starred Page and Newman in a censored, some say castrated, adaptation.) These two stars most probably set the standard for all subsequent interpretations, but even with such formidable footsteps to follow, Johnson and Smith do not stumble.

Johnson is sexy in a dissipated and desperate way. He's also alternately sensitive, and sadistic, and capable of a reckless courage. He is not beyond shame.

Smith delivers complicated monologues and conveys emotional swings with the ease and artistry of a true professional. She's divinely haughty and brutally depraved but not beyond sympathy.

Although Williams, in his own dialogue, claims the play is about the "enemy time in us all," one suspects "Sweet Bird of Youth" is more about the enemy that is ourselves: vanity and all — sexual rapacity and sexual repression, the desire for power and money, and self-delusion.

All these themes are present in "Sweet Bird of Youth." Boss Finley (Edmund McCarthy, who commands the stage every time he appears) is a corrupt politician who has destroyed the romance between Chance and his daughter, Heavenly (the convincing Dana Beninson) because he wants his daughter to marry someone whose connections will advance his political career. After Chance inherits Heavenly with syphilis, Finley vows revenge. But Chance is determined to wrest Heavenly from her father's grip.

At the same time, Boss Finley is attempting to retain control of his fiefdom despite rumors of his daughter's fall from grace. Finley, who claims he came down from the red clay hills on some kind of a mission, returns to the same theme that has served him so well in the past — the call to arms against black men who are threatening white maidenhood. As Chance and Finley struggle for Heavenly's soul, Finley and a lone Heckler (Gabriel Edelman) struggle for the soul of the south.

This production shines with outstanding performances in the supporting roles — Marilyn Beck as Nannie, the kind-hearted aunt who cautions Chance to leave town before he gets himself either killed or castrated; Keisha Alfred as Miss Lucy, Boss Finley's saucy and wise mistress; and Jamie Wolbarsht as Tom Finley Jr., the Boss's insipid son.

It also sports the beautiful and evocative sets of Gerry Newman, original music by Audimond and fight scenes that See **SWEET** on page **GO 4**

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Offbeat & on target

New Low bar gets high marks for feast of literary talent

By Paulanne Simmons
for the Brooklyn Papers

What do you do if you own a trendy DUMBO restaurant and have a large, unused space in the basement? The owners of Rice have answered that question by creating an intimate underground lounge, appropriately named Low, offering nourishment for the body and food for thought.

Low has a renovated industrial look produced by exposed bricks, beams and the water main of the building. Overhead, a web of lights creates the illusion of open sky. Patrons drink and even eat at the unpolished wooden bar, or at benches by low tables and barstools with high tables.

The lounge has a full-service bar that features cocktails and domestic and imported beers. And it offers a skewer menu with snacks such as sweet and spicy beef, *pinchado de pollo con romesco* (chicken, bacon and scallion with Catalan sauce of roasted tomato and almonds) and *yaki naru* (roasted Japanese eggplant with sake-miso glaze). Patrons who want more substantial fare can order from Rice's restaurant menu.

But what makes Low really special is its entertainment roster. On Wednesdays, the lounge presents a variety of burlesque, magic and DJs who spin old blues, jazz, boogaloo and country. Fridays and some Saturdays, the lounge has live music. And Thurs-

days, Low presents a reading series, "Playwrights in (other) Words," featuring short, comic pieces.

The manager and curator of programming is Ariana Smart, a young woman who cut her teeth working behind-the-scenes at the Wooster Group, which counts among its founding members Willem Dafoe and Spalding Gray.

Formed in 1975, under the direction of Elizabeth LeCompte, the Wooster Group has been recognized as one of the most politically and culturally radical theaters in the world. The group also produces films and videos. The Wooster Group is no stranger to DUMBO, having brought "To the Birdie!," featuring Dafoe and Frances McDormand, to St. Ann's Warehouse at 38 Water St. It was at the Wooster Group that Smart met playwright James Strahs, who read his work-in-progress "Open Call" at Low on Jan. 9.

Strahs' association with the Wooster Group dates back to the group's 1983 production of "North Atlantic." More recently, Strahs has been working on a theatrical series, "How to Act" (performed in Williamsburg last August), "Producers of Fiction," and "Jane Dorch," named after an actress.

"[The three plays] are about theater, the last refuge of scoundrels," said Strahs. "When playwrights run out of things to say they write about theater."

Snack peek: On Jan. 9, playwright James Strahs regales the patrons of the bar-lounge Low in DUMBO with a reading of his latest work-in-progress, "Open Call."

The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Mingo

After only a few weeks' work, however, a reading of Strahs' "Open Call," a play about what actors might say to each other while waiting to audition, ran for about an hour. Clearly, Strahs still has plenty of things to say.

"I like the opportunity of a reading, because it allows you to work it up. At a reading you can see what doesn't work," Strahs told GO Brooklyn.

Strahs does not yet know where his five-character play will go, but that doesn't bother him. "This is the fun time, because there's no pressure on me to do anything."

Certainly Low's full house of more than 30 enjoyed Strahs' reading, as well as the casual convivial atmosphere of the lounge.

On Jan. 16, Jorge Ignacio Cortinas will read from a novel-in-progress titled "The Polished Jungle." Cortinas is an award-winning Hispanic writer whose plays have been workshoped at INTAR, South Coast Repertory, the Magic New World Theater and the Arena; and have been produced by

Campo Santo and Intersection for the Arts.

Aaron Landsman will present a staged reading of "Family Establishment," a work performed site-specifically in bars, on Jan. 23. "Family Establishment" tells the stories of various strangers — a lawyer's experience with jelly-candies, a bartender's secret to making matzo ball soup, and a barfly's favorite entertainment in the park — illustrating the disappearing histories of neighborhoods and the possibility of intimacy among strangers. Landsman's work has appeared at PS 122, HERE, Chashama, Movement Research and Dixon Place, which is presenting the staging at Low.

For Smart, the formula that keeps Low vibrant is simple: "Classic cocktails, tasty food and nice, personal service." Add in a generous dash of off-beat and on-beat entertainment, and it's easy to see why after a mere six months, it seems Low has already become a hot spot for a young, spirited and sophisticated crowd.

NIGHTLIFE

Low's Playwrights in (other) Words: continues on Jan. 16 at 7 pm with Jorge Ignacio Cortinas; on Jan. 23 with a staged reading at 8 pm of Aaron Landsman's work; a reading by Adam Rago on Feb. 6 at 7 pm and a reading by Brooke Bernson on Feb. 13 at 7 pm. Low is located below the restaurant Rice at 81 Washington St., between Front and York Streets. For more information, call (718) 222-1569 or visit www.riceny.com/low on the Web.

Eighth Street and Surf Avenue. (718) 265-7574.

PUPPETWORKS: presents "The Prince and The Magic Flute," 12:30 and 2:30 pm. See Sat.

OTHER MEETING: Brooklyn Chapter of New York State Society for Clinical Social Work meets, 10 a.m. Free for members, 297 Degraw St. (718) 783-1561.

RECEPTION: Metaphor Contemporary Art Gallery presents "Paper 2003," 40 artists' works on paper and made of paper 1 to 4 pm, 70 Washington St. (718) 254-7726.

MOVIES AT THE MUSEUM: The Brooklyn Museum of Art takes the film organization "Women Make Movies" with a weekend of films on feminism and the arts. 1 to 2 pm. See Sat.

OOD SUNDAY: Museo Museum hosts guided tours of interactive sculptures. Also, The Lumino, an audio visual instrument, is demonstrated. \$10. \$5 kids under 6. 3 to 6 pm, 123 Smith St. (718) 797-3116.

MON, JAN 20

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

BROOKLYN TRIBUTE: Brooklyn Borough President Mark McKinnon, Brooklyn Academy of Music and Medgar Evers College celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Vocalist and songwriter Liz Wright performs with The Brooklyn Icternace Choir. Civil Rights Attorney Fred Gray delivers keynote address. Attorney General Eliot Spitzer also gives remarks. 11:30 a.m. Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. Screening of "The Rose Parks Story" 2:00 p.m. BAM Rose Cinema, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 326-4100.

BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN: Celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day with spirituals by the Great Day Chorus and a performance by the By All Means Save Some Youth

Ensemble. \$3. 11 am and 2:30 pm, 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 623-7333.

BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: presents youth dance troupe from Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration District Theater. \$4. 1:30 and 2 pm, 445 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 733-4400.

BELLY DANCING: Learn the moves. \$5 not just the belly. \$12. Community Center Arts, 522A Court St. (718) 854-9389.

BARRIES BAR: presents "Exile in Aomori," a selection of animated shorts dealing with exile. 9 pm. (718) 965-9177. Free.

TOT SAVER: Families first offers a CPR class for parents and caregivers of children from infancy to age 8. \$75. \$50 members. 9 am to 2 pm. Pre-registration required. 250 Bklyn St. (718) 237-1862.

BRIC STUDIO: experimental theater with American Theater Nexus. \$10. \$8 students. 7:30 pm. 37 Rockwell Place. (718) 955-1882.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Dorian Wainhouse's production of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." \$75, \$50. 7:30 pm. Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St. (718) 636-4111.

JEWISH LECTURE SERIES: Congregation Beth Eshrim hosts an adult series "Life and Death: Love and Loss, War and Peace: The Poetry of Nehemiah Amichai." Call for admission prices. 7:30 pm. Five consecutive Tuesday evenings, 274 Garfield Place. (718) 768-3814.

BALLROOM DANCE: Federation of Italian American Organizations dance lessons to adults. 8 pm. Advanced dance instruction 7 pm. Beacon Community Center at 5th Ave 15th St. 99 Ave. P. (718) 259-2828. Free.

BARRIES BAR: presents The Erik Jackson's Band. 9 pm. 376 Ninth St. (718) 965-9177. Free.

LIST YOUR EVENT...

To list your event in **Where to GO**, please give us as much notice as possible. Send your listing by mail: GO Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Papers, 26 Court St., Ste. 506, Brooklyn, NY 11242; or by fax: (718) 834-9278. Listings are free and printed on a space available basis. We regret we cannot take listings over the phone.

Weds, Jan 22

BLOOD DRIVE: at Met Life of Bay Ridge. 10 am to 3:30 pm. 15 Bay Ridge Ave. (908) 933-BLOOD.

HEALTH TALK: Health Plus offers a talk on sexually transmitted diseases. 10 pm. 241 27th St., suite 412. (718) 491-7584. Free.

MEETING: of Telecom Pioneers: Verizon Life Member Chapter. 11 am. Salem Lutheran Church, 9002 Third Ave. (718) 951-7441.

CPA TRAINING: sponsored by Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst Community Emergency Response Team. 6 pm. Bay Ridge streets. (718) 246-9691.

MEDITATION: Experience sahja yoga meditation. Workshop from 7 to 8 pm. 522A Court St. (718) 633-0751. Free.

BASEBALL REGISTRATION: 78th Precinct Youth Council hosts registration for spring season. 9:30 to 8 pm. Unlabeled Manor, Prospect Park West, between Fourth and Fifth streets. (718) 246-9691.

SQUARE DANCE: Al "a" Mo Squares invites new and experienced dancers to an evening of Jan. 7 to 9 pm. Unlabeled Manor, Prospect Park West, between Fourth and Fifth streets. (718) 246-9691.

SPEED DATING: Jewish Executive Learning Annex presents "8 Guys, 8 Girls, 8 Minutes." Meet

professional Jewish singles in a unique setting. Ages 40 to 60 welcome. \$25 includes wine and cheese. 8 to 10 pm. Barmegush, Fulton Ferry Landing. Advance registration necessary. (718) 596-4840.

HALCYON CAFE: Kai and Kohai play underground dance music. 6 to 9 pm. Also, Peace Bisquit Power Hour with DJ Bill Coleman. No cover. 9 pm to 1 am. 227 Smith St. (718) 262-8400.

ABOVE THE RIGHT BANK: Music with Crunk Kill Destroy. \$5. 8 pm. 409 Kent Ave. (718) 388-3929.

BARRIES BAR: presents The Erik Jackson's Band. 9 pm. 376 Ninth St. (718) 965-9177. Free.

LOW BAR: retro burlesque with Lady Ala of the Bombshell Girls. No cover. 9:30 pm. 81 Washington St. (718) 222-LLOW.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Twelfth Night." 7:30 pm. See Sat., Jan. 25.

THURS, JAN 23

CEREMONY: Fourth annual Native American Holiday. Prospect Park West hosts Native American food, vendors, storytelling, drumming name ceremony and more. 11 am to 4 pm. 670 Lafayette Ave. (718) 203-2202. Free.

FILM AND FUNDRAISING: Brooklyn Ethical Culture Society presents "Brothers and Sisters," a documentary about the lives of Jewish and South Asian families in the United States after the beginning of the 1920s. 11:17 pm. 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 482-3157.

BARNES AND NOBLE: presents Beatrice Coln, author of "Nude Untitled" and "Disappearing Act." 7 pm. 166 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music program of works by Debussy, Schumann, Stravinsky and Schubert. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

LECTURE: Stefano Carboni, asso-

ciate curator, department of Islamic art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, offers slide lecture. 7:30 pm. PS 321, 180 Seventh Ave. (718) 262-8675. Free.

LOW BAR: presents playwright Aaron Landsman in a staged reading. 8 pm. 81 Washington St. (718) 222-LLOW. Free.

BARRIES BAR: presents a Klezmer Jam. 9 pm. 376 Ninth St. (718) 965-9177. Free.

RED ROOM LOUNGE: presents a musical revue. 8 pm. See Sat., Jan. 25.

IMPACT THEATER: drama "The Golden Boy." \$15. 8 pm. 190 Underhill Ave. (718) 390-7163.

BROOKLYN LYCEUM: "31 Bond." 8 pm. See Sat.

BAM: "Twelfth Night." 7:30 pm. See Sat.

FRI, JAN 24

SUPPORT: Maimonides Medical Center hosts a group for those who have been affected by breast cancer. 9:30 to 11 am. Registration necessary. Maimonides Hospital, 620 Seventh Ave. (718) 283-0955. Free.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music program of works by Debussy, Schumann, Stravinsky and Schubert. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

OVERNIGHT ZOO EVENT: Prospect Park Zoo hosts an event. "Wildlife at Night." Appropriate for ages 8 to 11. \$65. 7:30 pm to 9 pm. Call to pre-register. (718) 397-7339.

VERTICAL PLAYERS: "The Dwarf" comic series. \$20. 8 pm. 219 Court St. (718) 539-2696.

GOOD COFFEEHOUSE: Second annual Night of Magic features a lineup of magicians including The Magical Maladras, Tokone and Marco Monteverdi. Call for prices. 8 pm. Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, 53 Prospect Park West. (718) 768-2972.

KIDS CAFE: Dancewear annual Kids Cafe Festival, a performance of dance, music and theater. Opening benefit performance features the Kids Company premiere of "Memories of Bittersweet Lives," created by choreographer Donald Byrd. \$100. 8 pm. Brooklyn Music School, 126 St. Felix St. (718) 622-2548.

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ame that play

Broadway buffs are sure to enjoy challenge of 'Don't Call Us' revue

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

In a wonderful departure from their usual repertoire, the Gallery Players will present an original musical revue based on the world of "fears, cheers and tears" we call Broadway.

"Don't Call Us (or Don't Give Up Your Day Job)" is directed by Mark Harborth—who has directed "Noises Off," "Animal Fair" and "Angels in America" for the Players—and features an ensemble of 15 men and women who sing and dance to the tunes, if not always the same words, of some of Broadway's most enduring hits.

The songs in "Don't Call Us" are hilarious remakes of the originals—tweaked to fit the theme of the show. Thus, "Make 'Em Laugh" becomes "Kill a Show," and "Tea for Two" becomes "Two Loving Stars." Some songs can easily be understood in a new context—"Will He Like Me?" "I Believe in You," "What Did I Have That I Don't Have."

A few songs have been given totally new meanings, like "Audition," sung to the tune of "Maria" from "West Side Story." But because Broadway is so fond of singing about itself, many of the songs fit in perfectly with their original words, like "Lullaby of Broadway" and "I Hope I Get It"



Phone tag: (Front to back) Shane Breaux, Jennifer M. Luers and Peter Mensky in the Gallery Players' production of "Don't Call Us (or Don't Give Up Your Day Job)."

from "A Chorus Line."

"Don't Call Us" has a plot, of sorts. Interspersed with the songs and dance are vignettes featuring three actors. A young man who hasn't quite

made it keeps phoning his mother for money (which he gets) and encouragement (which he doesn't get). An aspiring actress who's just come

to New York where she shares an apartment with two other aspiring actresses (Eve and Charity) records her experiences in her diary. A seasoned veteran who has seen it all and done it all hopes fervently for the comeback that will allow her to see it all and do it all again.

The revue gleefully illustrates the horrors of auditions, the perfidy of agents, the rudeness of audiences. One particularly memorable scene is "Major General Hospital," a medley of songs executed in the style of Gilbert and Sullivan and performed as a soap opera. "Tradition" is not about a milkman in Russia, but the kinds of people who cause disturbances in the audience—the Yacker, the Snacker and the Noisemaker.

"Child Actors," sung to the tune of "Hello, Dolly," compares children on the stage to leprosy, and "Tech," describes the 76 light crews.

"Who can I turn to when no one will cue me?" warbles one actor.

"I'll learn my lines... tomorrow," sings another.

"Don't Cry to Me, I'm Your Agent," trills still another.

This reviewer's personal favorite was "To dream the impossible dream/To understand a star/To pray, someday if you're lucky/The bitch will get hit by a car," sung by a bitter but hopeful understudy.

One of the most delightful aspects of watching "Don't Call Us" is trying to remember the original words to familiar tunes, and then figure out what show they came from. At one point this reviewer muttered to herself "Gigi" only to hear her neighbor gently correcting her with the whispered words "Pajama Game."

Surely, anyone who has ever been intoxicated by the smell of greasepaint and the roar of the crowd will find himself laughing and crying during this production. But whether you've tripped the lights, tripped over the lights or taken a trip into Manhattan to see the lights, you'll find this show a refreshing and rewarding experience.

Very few shows write their own review. But when the critic, in reviewing the show within the show, "The Broadway Review of 2003," says, "I couldn't have enjoyed it more," he certainly spoke for this reviewer, too.

THEATER

The Gallery Players production of "Don't Call Us" runs through Feb. 2, Thursday through Saturday at 8 pm, and Sunday at 3 pm. Tickets are \$15, \$12 seniors and children under 12. The theater is located at 199 14th St. at Fourth Avenue in Park Slope. For reservations, call (718) 995-0547.

HAMZA...

Continued from page GO 1
script called the "Hamzanama." (Only 200 survive from an original set of 1,400.)

"The Adventures of Hamza" is organized by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C. The principal lender to the exhibit, Vienna's MAK (the Austrian Museum of Applied

Arts/Contemporary Art), with the world's largest holding of "Hamzanama" paintings, has lent a core group of 28 paintings.

Four superbly preserved paintings from this show come from the Brooklyn Museum's own collection, including "Arghan Div Brings the Chest of Armor to Hamza," "Zamrudd Shah Reaches the Foot of a Huge Mountain and is Joined by Ra'im Blood-Drinker and Yaqut Shining-Ruby," "Umar,

Disguised as Mazmahil the Surgeon, Practices Quackery on the Sorcerers of Antali" and "The Ayyars, Led by Soughran Balaq and Lala the Spy, Split the Throats of the Prison Guards and Free Sa'id Furakh-Nizhad."

The museum enhances the appreciation for the Mughal artists by displaying the ingredients of their resourceful palette. They wrought their jewel-like paintings from lapis lazuli, indigo, cinabar (natural vermillion), red lead, ochre

and verdigris. There is also a poster in the exhibition identifying the cast of characters—with illustrations, a sort of Playbill—so the viewer can more easily "read" the stories in the paintings.

For those unable to see the exhibit before it closes on Jan. 26, the exhibit's curator John Seyler, professor of art history at the University of Vermont, has also assembled an informative catalogue of the show (Azimuth Editions, 2002).

In the catalogue, Antoinette Owen, senior paper conservator at the Brooklyn Museum, authors an essay on the complicated, technical aspects of the paintings. Owen explains that the "Hamzanama" illustrations are painted on fabric, while the stories were written in calligraphy on paper and attached to the reverse side of the illustrations. Supportive layers were included in between the paintings and calligraphy, and elaborate margins were added.

After its visit in Brooklyn, "The Adventures of Hamza" will be off to the Royal Academy of Art in London from March 15 through June 8.

THEATER

The Heights Players production of "Sweet Bird of Youth" runs through Jan. 26, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Tickets are \$10, \$8 seniors and students. The theater is located at 26 Willow Place at State Street in Brooklyn Heights. For reservations, call (718) 237-2722.

Players has taken those words and brought Williams powerful imagery to life on stage.

This production has a depth we don't often see on stage these days—on Broadway or in Brooklyn.

SWEET...

Continued from page GO 1
own their violent realism to the choreography of TJ Glem.

"Sweet Bird of Youth" starts insistently, but slowly. This is mostly due to Williams' dialogue, which although brilliant, can be verbose. But after the first act, the action speeds up to quickly that one is no longer bothered by the length of the play, which runs for close to three

hours with two intermissions.

At a time when the highly visual experience of film has cast a shadow over the more literary stage scripts of a bygone era, the poetry of playwriting lights like Tennessee Williams are a joyful, sometimes painful, reminder of the power of the spoken word. It is through words that Williams' characters experience and explain the depth of their despair. The Gallery

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The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob
Sat. Feb. 1st 8-10:30pm

A New York rabbi travels to Paris and gets mixed up in a comedy of errors. This is complicated by a broad slapstick farce about a bigoted businessman (Louis de Funes as Victor Pivert) who is forced to disguise himself as a rabbi. With echoes of silent-screen humor, this film is regarded in some circles as one of the funniest films ever made. Nominated for the 1974 Golden Globe Awards. Featuring post-screening discussion with Mr. Paul Rothman, Independent filmmaker/Founder of the Brooklyn Jewish Film Festival.

Time of Favor
Sat. Feb. 8th 8-10:30pm

Winner of six Israeli Oscars including Best Picture, Time of Favor is a taut thriller about the tense relationship between Orthodox Jewish Nationalists and the military. An Orthodox soldier finds his loyalty torn between his Rabbi and his commanding officer. Featuring post-screening discussion with a representative of the Israeli consulate.

Leon the Pig Farmer
Sat. Feb. 15th 8-10:30pm

In this zany British satire, Leon Geller is a "nice Jewish boy" who accidentally discovers that his biological father is a gentle pig farmer in Yorkshire. As he considers the differing lifestyles of the two sets of parents, Leon has to make a decision about his future. Featuring post-screening discussion with Simcha Weinstein, former associate of the British Film Commission.

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